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Barber Joe Mazzara Cut Raborn's Hair Aboard Ship In Korean War

City Man Treasures Note from Ex-Shipmate, Now CIA Chief

By DAVE ZWEIFEL

IF YOU'RE an espionage agent in this area, you'd better beware. The director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has a personal friend right here in Madison.

The friend is an East Side barber—Joe Mazzara. But, Joe isn't overly concerned with spying activities, he just enjoys cutting hair and doing a pitch for the U. S. Navy.

In fact, it was in the Navy that he met William F. "Red" Raborn, President Johnson's choice to head the highly secretive CIA.

From 1950 to 1951, Joe was a barber on the ship the then U.S. Navy Capt. Raborn commanded. During the hot days of the Korean War, Joe cut Raborn's hair and enjoyed several chats with the man.

"He was the best captain I ever served under," Joe commented. "He used to visit his men all the time; he was interested in the crew, the moral, and their welfare."

The friendly barber, who operates a shop at 1247 E. Johnson St., explained that Raborn made admiral shortly after that tour.

"I was surprised to read he was made director of the CIA this summer," Joe added. "So, I decided to send him a letter of congratulations and see if he still remembered me."

"Red" Raborn did remember. In a few days Joe got a reply:

"How delighted I was to hear from you and to know you have gone on to establish yourself in business. Most important, I note

you are bringing to the people with whom you are in contact the fine place which our Navy has in the defense of our country and the importance of manning it."

"Under separate cover I am forwarding to you my picture, and just let me wish you all the continued health, happiness and success from your shipmate," the CIA chief added.

In a few more days, Joe got Raborn's picture, personally autographed.

"It was quite a thrill to think a man I admired so much still remembered me," Joe said.

As a sideline, Joe is the recruiter for the Madison Naval Reserve unit. He estimated he has induced over 100 young Madison

son boys to join the reserve outfit.

This year marks Joe's 20th year with the Navy. He started on active duty in 1945, served until 1948 and then went back in when the Korean War broke out in 1950. The rest of the time he has been in the reserve.

"It was Raborn that convinced me that staying in the reserve was a good idea," Joe said. "Right now, I'm shooting for 30 years of service."

Joe started barbering in civilian life in 1955. Two years later he opened his present shop where he and Harlow Kipfer, 5418 Balsam Rd., keep customers well groomed.

"I learned barbering in the Navy back in 1945," Joe remembered. "You should have seen the head of the first guy I cut."

Joe lives with his wife, Elizabeth, and their six children at 1005 Glenview Dr. The children are Greg, 9; Debbie, 8; Susan, 6; Jeff, 4; Joey, 2; and Tom, eight months.